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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to collect empirical data on the academic quality of Catholic colleges. Specifically, the study identified and analyzed selected academic characteristics of 22 Catholic and 22 secular colleges that had certain features in common. The academic features studied were: (1) percentage of freshman class applications accepted; (2) percentage of incoming freshmen graduating in the top fifth of their high school class; (3) average SAT score of entering freshmen; (4) percentage of college graduates going on immediately to full-time graduate study; (5) percentage of faculty holding doctorates; (6) average faculty salaries; and (7) average number of library books per undergraduate student. Results indicated that (1) Catholic colleges accepted students of slightly lower high school rank, but of similar SAT verbal score averages; (2) Catholic colleges seem to have a greater number of library volumes per student when compared with selected secular colleges; and (3) Catholic colleges seemed to pay lower faculty salaries. In general, it was found that the larger Catholic colleges have become more like secular colleges in certain academic characteristics. (AF)

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SELECTED ACADEMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES

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Limited empirical research (2,3) exists concerning the current academic status of Catholic colleges.* Various assertions are being made by spokesmen for Catholic colleges as well as by Catholic and non-Catholic scholars writing in specialized publications. One observation claims that though it may have been true in the past that Catholic colleges generally were academically inferior to secular colleges, this assertion is no longer the case. Andrew Greeley (2) stated recently:

It is safe to conclude...that the quality of many Catholic colleges and universities is none too impressive. But it is important to emphasize that the quality of most of American higher education is none too impressive, and that Catholic schools are no better and no worse than the vast majority of other American higher educational institutions. (p. 19).

There is a need to gather and report empirical data which will give a more detailed, accurate picture of the academic quality of Catholic colleges.

* The terms "colleges" and "universities" are used synonymously throughout the report and refer to the undergraduate level.

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PURPOSE

The general purpose of this report is to analyze data on selected academic characteristics of groups of Catholic colleges. Specifically, this study aims to identify selected academic characteristics, to identify appropriate Catholic and secular colleges having certain features in common, to compare these colleges according to the identified academic characteristics, to analyze these comparisons, and to report conclusions in the form of brief, general statements.

The study will not evaluate or judge the worth or lack of worth of the institutions. No attempt is made to compare any single institution with any other, or to compare groups of institutions in different geographical areas.

METHODOLOGY

Alan Sorkin's approach (7) suggested the basic design of the study. He depended on the Comparative Guide to American Colleges (1) for a substantial part of his data. The present investigator drew his base data from that source in order to concentrate on a single, current source of data. That the data were reported in a standardized format from information supplied by the colleges seemed to help in making valid comparisons and in drawing appropriate conclusions.

The following academic characteristics were selected:

1. percent of freshmen class applications accepted;
2. class rank of incoming freshmen in terms of percent graduating in the top fifth of their high school class;
3. average SAT scores of entering freshmen;
4. percent of college graduates going on immediately to full-

- time graduate study;
- 5. percent of faculty holding the doctorate;
- 6. average faculty salaries;
- 7. average number of library books per undergraduate student.

The first four characteristics relate to the student body, probably the most important single factor in determining the nature and quality of a college. Considered individually, these four characteristics may not be necessarily meaningful; taken together, however, they constitute rough indicators of the nature of the student body. The percent of applications accepted gives a clue to the nature of admissions standards and to the value the institution places on student potential, especially when considered with class rank data. SAT scores and class rank data provide objective standards outside the college itself. The percent of the senior class going immediately to full-time graduate school study provides some idea as to the ease (or lack of it) with which graduates of particular colleges gain acceptance to graduate schools.

The next two characteristics pertain to faculty quality, another important factor in determining overall college quality. First, it is likely that the more doctorates held, the stronger the faculty. This may confer greater status on the institution, which, in turn, attracts more qualified students. Second, higher-than-average faculty salaries tend to attract more promising scholar-teachers.

Finally the number of library books per undergraduate student serves as a rough indicator of the accessibility of published material for the student, as

well as a means of determining the extent to which the institution itself supports one of its more vital educational resources.

Obviously, these are not the only academic characteristics of quality; for instance, expenditure-per-student data could have been employed, but were not, because of the difficulty of defining this term and of amassing comparable data. Despite this limited list of measures, however, the selected indicators, taken as a whole, give the reader an informed albeit limited, insight into the colleges. These particular measures were selected by the investigator for an additional reason: they are amenable to revision by college trustees, administrators, and staffs.

Within the limits of this report, it was not possible to collect and analyze data on all or most Catholic colleges. It was decided, therefore, to limit the sample to the largest Catholic colleges. The 22 chosen account for approximately 37% of full-time undergraduate enrollment in Catholic colleges in 1968.

Non-Catholic colleges were selected with roughly comparable enrollment and geographical location as their secular counterparts. This procedure tended to equalize social and economic characteristics of students as well as the proportion of resident and non-resident student bodies between Catholic and non-Catholic colleges.

The 22 Catholic colleges selected are:

Loyola, Chicago
St. John's, New York
Marquette
St. Louis
Fordham
Detroit
Dayton
DePaul
Boston College
Villanova
Georgetown

Notre Dame
Duquesne
Catholic University
Seton Hall
San Francisco
Manhattan
John Carroll
Santa Clara
Xavier, Cincinnati
LaSalle
St. Joseph's, Philadelphia

The secular colleges chosen are:

Wayne State
Hunter
Indiana
Boston University
San Francisco State
Wisconsin, Milwaukee
American
Eastern Michigan
George Washington
Washington, St. Louis, Missouri
Case-Western Reserve

Hofstra
Drexel
Toledo
Illinois State
Newark, New Jersey
Cleveland State
Virginia
Indiana of Pennsylvania
Montclair, New Jersey
West Chester, Pennsylvania
California, Hayward

Insert Table 1 Here

As can be seen from Table 1, Catholic colleges within the respective geographical areas have quite similar academic characteristics pertaining to students. Georgetown, University of Virginia, and Catholic University report similar comparative data relative to students, for instance, as do Boston College-Boston University, and Fordham-Hofstra.

In terms of percentage of the freshman class graduating in the top fifth of their high school class, 7 are Catholic and 11 are non-Catholic of the 18 at the 50% level or higher. Thus, of the colleges selected for this study, secular colleges select freshman students who appear to have somewhat greater academic potential, based on this one academic characteristic. Of the 16 institutions reporting SAT scores of 550 or higher, 8 are Catholic and 8 are secular. Of those 14 at the 510 level or lower, 6 are Catholic and 8 are non-Catholic. Both types of institutions are generally similar in terms of verbal SAT scores. 20 Catholic and non-Catholic colleges exceed the average number of library volumes per student, which is 45.8 for colleges and universities generally, as reported in the 1968 edition of the Bower Annual (8). Of these 20, 15 are Catholic colleges

and 5 are secular colleges. On the other hand, of the 9 colleges under 35 volumes per student, 2 are Catholic and 7 non-Catholic.

Even though many colleges, both Catholic and non-Catholic, failed to give faculty data, reporting Catholic colleges and secular colleges reveal similar faculty salary scales and similar information regarding the number of faculty holding the doctorate data. Thus Boston College and Boston University, for example, both report that 66% of their faculties hold the doctorate. Their faculty salary scales are substantially above the national average.

As far as faculty salaries are concerned, 12 colleges are reported as having faculty salaries substantially above the national average. Of these 12, 4 are Catholic (Boston College, Fordham, Notre Dame, and Catholic University) and 8 secular (Hunter; University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; Washington University, St. Louis; Hofstra; Boston University; Drexel Institute; Indiana University; and the University of Virginia).

The present study offers some derived data which suggests that the 22 largest Catholic colleges, on the basis of selected academic characteristics, have similar entrance standards, make similar academic demands of students, and hope to recruit and retain the same level of competent faculty as comparable secular colleges. Not all Catholic colleges

(or secular colleges, for that matter) were found to be equal in academic resources and commitments; quite the reverse is true. Great variability exists among Catholic* (and non-Catholic) colleges in terms of the academic characteristics selected and examined in this study.

More specifically, it was found that:

- 1) Catholic colleges examined here, accepted students of slightly lower high school class rank but of similar SAT verbal score averages;
- 2) More Catholic colleges seem to have a greater number of library volumes per student when compared with selected secular colleges;
- 3) Even though complete faculty data was not reported by all colleges in the survey, it can be inferred that Catholic colleges pay lower faculty salaries.

Overall, on the basis of the limited data examined here, it is found that the largest Catholic colleges have academic requirements similar to secular colleges of comparable undergraduate enrollment located in the same general geographical area. This limited study substantiates assertions that the larger Catholic colleges have become more like secular colleges in certain academic characteristics.

*Dayton University, for example, reported a freshman class scoring in the top 43% of their high school class and whose SAT scores averaged 487 V and 526 M. On the other hand, Boston College reported that for its freshman class, 53% graduated in the top fifth of their high school class, and had SAT scores which averaged 617 V and 637 M. At Fordham 70% of the males in the senior class went on to full-time graduate study compared to 23% of the senior males at Dayton University.

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Table 1

Characteristics of All Colleges by Geographical Area

Institution	Totl. Enroll-ment	F.T. Under-Grad Enroll-ment	Characteristics						
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G
California									
San Francisco St. College	18121	9652	59%	85%	510V 490M	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	32+
* San Francisco, Univ. of	5906	3356	80%	77% top 1/4	544V 543M	35%	N.R.	N.R.	44+
California St. College Hayward	3296	3204	68%	70%	23C(ACT) 22.5M	58%	N.R.	N.R.	43+
* Santa Clara, Univ. of	4390	2638	65%	70%	563V 574M	40%	N.R.	N.R.	50+
District of Columbia & Virginia									
American	13600	4243	41%	55% top 1/4	550V approx avg.all schools 525M	N.R.	N.R.	A.N.A.	38+
* George Washington	12730	4177	52%	49%	588V 586M	50%	90%sr. 50%jr.	A.N.A.	100+
Virginia, Univ. of	7851	4634	48% (A&S)	63%	601V 638M	42% all schs.	80%sr. 72%jr.	S.A.N.A.	316
Georgetown	7591	3828	39%	64%	624V (A&S) male only 631M	45%	90%sr. 70%jr.	A.N.A.	160
* Catholic Univ.	6641	2527	64%	68%	600V 600M	55%	89%sr. 74%jr.	S.A.N.A.	267

Institution	Totl. Enroll- ment	F.T. Under- Grad Enroll- ment	Characteristics						
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Indiana									
Indiana Univ.	28910	18525	74%	52%	498V 512M	N.R.	N.R.	S.A.N.A.	104+
* Notre Dame	7425	6036(M)	58%	69%	582V(A&S) 607M(ACT)	55%	60%	S.A.N.A.	121+
Illinois									
Milwaukee, Wisconsin Univ. of	14173	8481	N.R.	37%	22.6C 23M(ACT)	N.R.	N.R.	S.A.N.A.	59
* Loyola, Chicago	12242	5245	79%	42%	543V 534M	72% B Avg.	N.R.	A.N.A.	86+
* Marquette	11513	6746	80%	42%	529V 544M	N.R.	N.R.	A.N.A.	56+
* De Paul	9864	3275	75%	33%	499V 506M	30% 15%	N.R.	A.N.A.	65+
Illinois State Univ.	9699	8255	70%	44%	23C (ACT)	10%	N.R.	A.N.A.	42
Massachusetts Boston Univ.	22629	12173	59% Lib A	63%	586V 591M	N.R.	66%	S.A.N.A.	54+
* Boston College	9568	5765	42%	53%	617V 637M	71%	66%	S.A.N.A.	115
Michigan Wayne State	30832	14596	60%	grad of Mich H.S.- B Avg.	499V 518M	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.
Eastern Michigan	12915	9569	79%	33%	grad. of accred HS with accept academic record eligible	50%	N.R.	N.R.	N.R.

Table 1 (cont.).

Institution	Totl. Enroll- ment	F.T. Under- Grad Enroll- ment	Characteristics						
			A	B	C	D	E	F.	G
Case-Western Reserve	12412	2377	70%	65%M 77%W	571M 586F 624M 581F	60-70%M 20%F	85%	N.R.	N.R.
* Detroit, Univ. of	10182	6248	65%	40%	521V (A&S) 543M	31% (A&S)	N.R.	A.N.A.	48+
Missouri									
* St. Louis Univ.	11148	4765	82%	43%	24C 25M(ACT)	75%M 55%(A&S)	N.R.	A.N.A.	162
Washington Univ. St. Louis	12469	3499	81%	73%	597V 625M	75%M 20%F(A&S)	80%sr. 60%jr.	S.A.N.A.	265
New Jersey									
Newark St. College	9168	3096	54%	51% top 1/4	509V 489M	3%	N.R.	A.N.A.	22+
* Seton Hall	6516	2772	54%	29%	502V 525M	34%	N.R.	N.R.	85+
Montclair St. College	6326	3983	35%	68%	531V 528M	15%M 590F	N.R.	A.N.A.	25+
New York									
Hunter College	27006	10405	50%	88%	509V 509M	N.R.	N.R.	Among highest in country	34
* St. John's Univ.	12202	5348	51%	N.R.	523V 535M	N.R.	N.R.	A.N.A.	N.R.
Hofstra	12054	4381	63%	33%	584V 547M	35%	N.R.	S.A.N.A.	40+
* Fordham	10887	5167	68%	50%	582V 586M	70%M 60%F	90%sr. 80%jr.	S.A.N.A.	139
* Manhattan	4581	3568(M)	61%	40%	560V 610M	43%	N.R.	A.N.A.	35

Table 1 (cont).

Institution	Totl. Enroll- ment	F.T. Under- Grad Enroll- ment	Characteristics						
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G.
Ohio									
Toledo	11594	7224	56%	9%	508V 532M	35% 10%	N.R.	A.N.A.	39
* Dayton, Univ. of	10046	7176	61%	43%	487V 526M	23%M 17%F	N.R.	N.R.	29+
Cleveland State	8252	3770	82%	35%	466V 516M	4%M 1%F	N.R.	A.N.A.	21+
* John Carroll	4570	2644	80%	42% top 1/4	511V 539M	40%	N.R.	A.N.A.	65+
* Xavier Univ., Cinn.	3296	2373	49%	29%	496V 525M	47%	N.R.	A.N.A.	60
Pennsylvania									
Drexel Institute of Technology	10347	5328	61%	68% Engineer & Sc.	550V 645M	27%M 49%F	N.R.	S.A.N.A.	40+
* Villanova	7698	4797	66%	35%	510V 560M	49%M 1%F	N.R.	S.A.N.A.	40+
Indiana Univ. Of Penna.	7277	6061	64%	78%	523V 550M	10% 3%	N.R.	N.R.	36+
* Duquesne	6763	3974	76%	36%	503V 503M	N.R.	N.R.	A.N.A.	53+
West Chester St. College	6015	4309	53%	41%	506V 509M	40%M 20%F	N.R.	N.R.	32+
* La Salle	3016	3016M	48%	38%	530V 545M	65%	N.R.	N.R.	42
* St. Joseph's, Penna.	1800	1800	45%	58%	569V 589M	37%	N.R.	N.R.	41+

Table 1 (cont).

Note

A = % of applicants accepted
 B = % in top 1/5 of H.S. Class
 C = average SAT scores
 D = % of graduates going to full time graduate study.
 E = % of faculty holding doctorate
 F = average faculty salaries
 G = number of library books per student

A.C.T. = American College Testing Program
 N.R. = not reported
 A.N.A. = about national average
 S.A.N.A. = substantially above national average
 A.&.S = Arts and Sciences
 sr. = senior faculty
 jr. = junior faculty
 M = Male)
 F = Female) in column D

* = Catholic colleges